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6th June, 2009.

Mr David Miles AM
Chairman
Innovation Australia
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Dear Mr Miles

Re-tooling for Climate Change

On behalf of the Australian co-operative sector we seek your assistance in addressing what we believe to be an unintended consequence with regard to the eligibility criteria for applying for assistance under the above program.

It has been brought to our attention that the guidelines relating to the Re-tooling for Climate Change program administered by Innovation Australia stipulate that to be eligible to apply for assistance, a business is required to be incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001.

A number of Australian enterprises have adopted the co-operative business model and are registered under their respective State Co-operatives Act, effectively denying them access to the program. For all practical purposes these co-operative businesses operate in a similar manner to an entity incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and face the same climate change issues.

Clause 17 of the Ministerial Directions No. 1 of 2008 issued to Innovation Australia by Senator the Hon Kim Carr, makes provision for your Board to advise the Minister on certain aspects of the Program. As such we ask, on behalf of the co-operative business sector, that the Board assist in bringing about a change to the directions by initiating a recommendation to the Minister that the eligibility criteria be amended to include co-operative businesses incorporated under State legislation.

We believe the matter needs to be addressed with a minimum of delay. By Innovation Australia recommending to the Minister a change that corrects what we see as an unintended consequence, co-operative business should be able to access the program before the up-coming cut off dates. It is our understanding that if we made representations direct to the Minister he would in turn seek the advice of the Board before initiating any change, which would add to the delay in effecting the required changes and potentially disenfranchise businesses that should have access the Re-tooling for Climate Change program.

Thank for your assistance and should you require any additional background information our Chairman, Mr. Tony O'Shea, can be contacted on (03) 5465 3744.

For Co-operatives Australia



David Griffiths
Secretary

Co-operatives Australia is the national body for State Co-operative Federations. It is an unincorporated body with membership by the Co-operative Federations of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, and represents cooperatives in every sector of the Australian economy.